

THE REMONSTRANCE.

BOSTON.

The Remonstrance is addressed to the Legislatures of the several States by Women Remonstrants against the extension of the suffrage to women. It expresses the views of such Remonstrants in Massachusetts, Maine, Illinois, and other States who believe that the great majority of their sex do not want the ballot, and that to force it upon them would not only be an injustice to women, but would lessen their influence for good and imperil the community. The Remonstrants ask a thoughtful consideration of their views in the interest of fair discussion.

NOT THE SAME THING.

It should be borne in mind that municipal suffrage for women as petitioned for in this country is not like municipal suffrage as exercised by women in Great Britain or anywhere else. Under the English law, as well as under the laws in British colonies, the use of the ballot by women in municipal affairs is restricted to women who pay rates and taxes in their own names. If this system were to prevail in this country, the number of women who would be entitled to cast a ballot, even in our larger cities, would be only a few hundred at the most. But it is for no such limited suffrage as this that the American agitators ask. What they want is suffrage for all women — the illiterate as well as the intelligent, the corrupt as well as the pure, the irresponsible as well as those who have something at stake in the welfare of the community. To grant municipal suffrage to women would be to double or more than double the possible voters, and to multiply manifold those who have no intelligent understanding of municipal questions and no aptitude for dealing with them.

The argument for municipal suffrage for women, so far as there is any argument, ought to rest on conditions which prevail in this country, and not on usages in England or the British colonies which resemble only in name the kind of suffrage which is asked for here.

RECENT DEFEATS OF WOMAN SUFFRAGE.

IN 1891.

Municipal suffrage bills were defeated in Maine, Minnesota, Massachusetts, California, North Dakota, Nebraska, Michigan, and Illinois. In New York, for the first time in eleven years, no suffrage bill reached a vote. In Kansas a suffrage amendment was indefinitely postponed. Suffrage bills were defeated in Arkansas and Arizona, and in New Hampshire a bill to extend the right of suffrage to women owning taxable property was voted down.

IN 1892.

In Massachusetts, April 27, a license suffrage bill was defeated in the House, 87 yeas, 90 nays, with 6 pairs. A motion to reconsider was voted down the day following. May 2, a municipal suffrage bill was defeated in the Senate: yeas, 10, nays, 22. Petitions asking for Presidential suffrage and for a suffrage amendment to the Constitution were referred to the next General Court.

In Rhode Island, April 26, the House, by a unanimous vote, gave "leave to withdraw" to the petitioners for Presidential suffrage.

In New York, the Assembly, April 16, passed, by a vote of 69 to 34, a bill which gave women the right to vote for all State officers and on every question submitted to the vote of the people. The vote of the Assembly was not taken seriously, and the Senate did not vote on the proposition.

In Iowa, March 12, the House defeated, by a vote of 29 yeas to 54 nays, a school suffrage bill and a municipal suffrage bill. Indefinite postponement was voted to a Presidential suffrage bill.

In Kentucky, a school suffrage bill was introduced, but did not reach a vote.

In Ohio, February 25, the House defeated a bill giving school suffrage to women.

In Vermont, November 2, the House, by a vote of 149 to 83, passed a bill giving women the right to vote at town meetings. The bill came before the Senate November 15, where it was killed: yeas, 10, nays, 18.

In South Carolina, December 19, the Senate, by a vote of 21 to 14, accepted an unfavorable report on a proposition to amend the Constitution so as to allow women to vote and to hold office.

IN 1893.

In Arizona, the House passed a bill giving full suffrage to women by a vote of 16 to 7, but it failed in the other branch.

In Arkansas, a school suffrage bill passed the Senate but was tabled in the House.

In California, a school suffrage bill passed the House by a vote of 42 to 27 and the Senate by a vote of 31 to 6, but was vetoed by the Governor.

In Connecticut, a bill permitting women to vote on the license question was defeated.

In Illinois, a township suffrage bill, permitting women to vote for supervisors, town clerks, assessors, and highway commissioners, also to participate and vote in all town meetings, was passed by the Senate but failed in the House.

In Indiana, municipal suffrage bills were introduced in both branches of the Legislature, but failed to pass.

In Maine, the House, by a vote of 48 to 75, defeated a municipal suffrage bill, which had passed the Senate.

In Massachusetts, a bill conferring municipal suffrage upon women was amended by a provision requiring that before taking effect it should be accepted by a majority of the men and women of the State. This amendment, which was recognized as hostile to the bill, was adopted by a vote of 110 to 90, and the bill as amended was defeated, yeas 101, nays 111, including 14 pairs.

In Michigan, a municipal suffrage bill was enacted but was pronounced unconstitutional by the Supreme Court.

In Minnesota, a municipal suffrage bill, so amended as to strike out the word "male" from the Constitution, passed the Senate but was killed in the House.

In Missouri, a municipal suffrage bill was defeated in the House: yeas 45, nays 68.

In New Mexico, a bill conferring full suffrage upon women passed the House but did not reach a vote in the other branch.

In New York, the only suffrage bill which reached a vote was one allowing women to vote in village elections, which was defeated in the Senate, April 3. The Supreme Court decided that the law passed by the Legislature of 1892, permitting women to vote for school commissioners, was unconstitutional.

In North Dakota, a suffrage bill was passed by the House but was afterward reconsidered and the earlier vote was expunged from the records.

In South Dakota, a bill giving women municipal suffrage was passed by the Senate but was defeated in the lower legislative branch, 27 yeas to 50 nays.

In the United States Senate, October 16, an amendment to strike out the word "male" from the qualifications of voters at the municipal elections to be held in that part of Oklahoma known as the Cherokee Outlet, was defeated; yeas 9, nays 40.

MUNICIPAL SUFFRAGE NOT CONSTITUTIONAL.

THE Springfield Republican, an ardent advocate of woman suffrage, commenting some time ago upon the adoption of the suffrage amendment in Colorado, in connection with the Michigan decision pronouncing municipal suffrage unconstitutional, said: —

Now Colorado and Wyoming are the States in which woman suffrage is firmly established without fear of further agitation. The other States must, evidently, — judging from the Michigan experience, — make amendments to their constitutions before taking any further steps toward carrying woman suffrage. Probably in all State constitutions, or nearly all, the language expressing the qualifications of the voter may be construed to mean only men, though a generous construction could make it include women. This generous construction cannot be relied upon, for if a Legislature so construes it, the courts can commonly be counted upon to pronounce it unconstitutional on the suit of any enemy of the ballot for women. The next move of the woman-suffrage associations must be in the direction of State constitutional amendments.

This is good advice, and from a friendly quarter, yet the agitators for woman suffrage are still so afraid to submit their case to the decision of the people in any State that they continue to appeal to the Legislatures to pass laws admitting women to municipal suffrage. It is open to doubt, as The Republican suggests, whether nearly all of the State constitutions are not clearly susceptible of such an interpretation as would overthrow any municipal suffrage law. There can at least be no doubt that such enactments are contrary to the spirit of the constitutions of the States, and it never was intended that so radical a change in the electorate should be made at the caprice of a single Legislature, without any expression of the will of the people.

When the leaders of the suffrage movement try to avoid the hazard of submitting their cause to the vote of the people, do they not make clear their consciousness of the fact that the change which they advocate is approved by only a minority of the people? And what is this but a subversion of the will of the people and a violation of the principle of majority rule? Every movement for the enactment of municipal suffrage is in effect an attempt to get by stealth what could not be obtained by the direct act of the people.

THE MICHIGAN DECISION.

ONE of the heaviest blows which the suffrage movement has experienced is the decision of the Supreme Court of Michigan declaring unconstitutional the law passed by the Legislature of 1893 conferring on women the right to vote at municipal elections. The passage of this law had been hailed as a great triumph, and sanguine expectations were entertained as to the effect of the example of Michigan upon other States. But the Michigan decision was especially damaging, because it was not only of such a character as to forbid any extension of the suffrage in that State save by amendment of the constitution, but the principles on which it was based are widely applicable and make against the surreptitious attempts which are made to extend woman suffrage by simple act of legislature, without submitting the issue to the vote of the people.

The decision of the court was unanimous. In substance it declared that the source of all authority to vote at popular elections is the Constitution; that the electorate is constituted by fundamental law; that the qualifications of electors must be uniform throughout the State, and that wherever the Constitution has prescribed the qualifications of electors, they cannot be changed or added to by the Legislature or otherwise, except by an amendment to the Constitution. The court quoted the provision of the Constitution that electors shall be male citizens and affirmed that the terms are applicable to all elections. It declared further that to empower the Legislature to confer the elective franchise upon other classes of persons than those named it is necessary to point out some provision which confers that authority by express terms or by necessary implication; but no such provision is to be found, hence the act conferring municipal suffrage on women is void.

The Detroit Tribune, the leading Republican paper of the State, declares that by reason of this decision "woman suffrage in Michigan, either equal or limited, is placed beyond the pale of political possibility for a generation at least," because it would be impossible to secure the extension of the franchise to women by a constitutional amendment, which is the only method open under the decision, except "at the end of a long agitation,

resulting in a very considerable change of sentiment among both men and women." This seems to involve an admission that at present the majority of both sexes are against the extension of suffrage to women, which is doubtless true in Michigan and elsewhere.

PROOF IS WANTED.

MR. BLAIR's report ends by saying that men can have no motive for refusing the suffrage to women but the selfish one of unwillingness to part with half of the sovereign power. Selfishness in this matter would undoubtedly be not only wickedness but folly. What is good for woman is good in the same measure for man, and ought not for a moment to be withheld. One lady in her evidence warns Congress, if it will not give way, that the wild enthusiasm of woman can be used for evil as well as good, and threatens in America a repetition of the scenes of the French Commune. More terrible even than this menace is the fear of doing an injury to man's partner, and thereby a deeper injury to man himself. But the change ought to be proved good. Before man hands over the government to woman he ought to be satisfied that he cannot do what is right himself. In an age of "flabby" sentiment and servile worship of change, we have had enough of weak and precipitate abdications. To one of them we owe the catastrophe of the French Revolution and the deluge of calamity which has followed. To man, as he could alone enforce the law, the sovereign power came naturally and righteously. Let him see whether he cannot make a just use of it, in the interest of his wife and children as well as in his own, before he sends in his resignation. — *From Goldwin Smith's Questions of the Day.*

WHY, INDEED?

THE cause of woman suffrage does not seem to have made the least progress in this part of the country in the last quarter of a century, if, indeed, it has not lost ground. We refer to the sentiment in favor of exercising the right to vote, and the demand for it among women themselves. If women do not care for the suffrage, why should it be thrust upon them? — *New York Times.*

TWO AND ONE-HALF PER CENT.

THE Connecticut Legislature, at its session in 1893, granted the privilege of school suffrage to the women of that State. It was urged that the women were anxious for the privilege; numerous petitions were sent in favoring the proposition, and urgent personal appeals were made to legislators. After the bill became law, an active propaganda was undertaken to induce the women to avail themselves of their new opportunity. The elections in October showed to what extent the privilege was appreciated. A careful estimate showed that just two and one-half per cent. of the women entitled to vote under the act of the Legislature exercised that right. In eighty-four towns, more than half of those holding elections, not a single woman voted. In the entire State only 4,141 votes were cast by women. This affords a pretty good test of the desire of women with reference to the ballot. The number voting when the privilege was new would be likely to be larger than after the suffrage had become an old story. Yet the agitators who went before the Legislature in support of the suffrage bill claimed to represent the "women" of the State. The result proved that they spoke for just two and one-half per cent. of them. The percentage probably would not vary greatly in other States.

WAIT FOR EXPERIMENT.

WOMAN'S Suffrage is a change fraught with the most momentous results, not only to the Commonwealth, but to the household. Let Wyoming and New Zealand try it, say for ten years. The success of the Wyoming experiment is publicly proclaimed, and the universe is exhorted to do likewise, by Wyoming, whose voice is now that of the female voters. Private accounts are not so favorable. The New Zealand experiment will be more satisfactory, though New Zealand, having no warlike neighbors, does not run the same risk in emasculating her government which is run by a European State. If at the end of ten years it appears from the two experiments that legislation and government have become wiser, more far-sighted, and more just, without any detriment to the peace and order of the home, let the world

follow the example, and be grateful to those by whom the first experiment was made. — *From Goldwin Smith's Questions of the Day.*

THE NEW YORK DECISION.

JUDGE P. C. WILLIAMS of the Supreme Court of the State of New York has rendered a decision pronouncing the law enacted by the Legislature of 1892 allowing women to vote for school commissioner to be unconstitutional. The grounds on which this decision is based may be briefly stated. The Constitution of New York provides that all county officers "whose election or appointment is not provided for by this Constitution shall be elected by the electors of the respective counties or appointed by the boards of supervisors or other county authorities as the Legislature shall direct." The office of school supervisor was created after the Constitution was adopted, and by the terms of the act creating it was to be an elective office. It is therefore to be filled by the electors of the respective counties, and the Constitution expressly limits by the word "male" the citizens empowered to vote for all officers who are elective by the people. Accordingly the act empowering women to vote for school commissioner is in conflict with the Constitution and void. Commenting on this decision, in connection with one of a similar tenor rendered by the Michigan Court, the New York Evening Post very justly remarks:—

The decision of Justice Williams of the Supreme Court that women have not the constitutional right to vote for school commissioners in this State, under the statute of 1892 assuming to give them that right, is in line with the recent decision of the Michigan Supreme Court annulling for unconstitutionality the act of the last Legislature to enable women to vote in municipal elections. In each case it seemed clear enough beforehand that both the letter and the spirit of the Constitution stood in the way of the proposed legislation, and that the courts could not fail so to hold when the matter should be carried before them. An amendment of the Constitution is required to bring about changes of far less importance, and it would be absurd if a Legislature could make so sweeping a change as the doubling of the electorate by a mere statute. The probability is that both in New York and Michigan the lawmakers expected to see their work annulled, and are not at all surprised at the decisions of the courts.

SUFFRAGE NOT A NATURAL RIGHT.

It is further urged that discriminating against women at the polls is an implication of inferiority and an indignity to her sex. Not so is it generally regarded by women. The average woman deems her duties respectable, and about as onerous as she cares to assume, and feels no need of the honor the ballot would confer. Thirty years of faithful missionary labor have failed to make her realize that she is suffering for want of it.

Woman, it is further claimed, is a citizen having natural right to the ballot, and as all just government rests on the consent of the governed, it is unjust to deprive her of all share in choice of rulers and to exact obedience to laws in making which she has no part. This is absurd and atheistic. The right to govern does not rest upon the consent of the governed. The divine authority, to which all rightful human authority is subordinate, rests on no such basis. God never asked permission to reign. The right of the parent to govern does not rest on the consent of his children. Right to punish the criminal does not rest on his consent to be punished. Governments were ordained to govern, not to be governed. The right or duty to govern rests on the same foundation on which every other obligation rests—the claims of the highest good, the supreme law of the moral world. It is his duty and right to govern who can do it best. He is the right ruler whose services, in that capacity, the highest interest of all demands.—*The Rev. John M. Williams, in Bibliotheca Sacra.*

THE SUFFRAGE IN ENGLAND.

VERY misleading statements have been made regarding the suffrage question in England as connected with the recent vote on the Parish Councils bill. This is a bill which relates to petty matters of local administration, hitherto vested in the church wardens, such as poor relief, the care of the roads, etc. Under the bill these powers are to be exercised by parish councils, and women who are taxpayers, whether married or single, will be entitled to vote for members of these councils. The only apparent significance of this change is that it removes the distinction formerly maintained between women who were married and those who were not, the suffrage having been confined to unmarried women and widows hitherto.

RELIGIOUS ANTIPATHIES.

It is lamentable to observe that in many of the Connecticut cities and towns where the women voted for school committee for the first time this week, there were Protestant tickets and Catholic tickets, and that the Protestant and Catholic women in some localities vied with each other in getting registered. — *Boston Herald*.

It is to be noticed that wherever a large vote was polled by women at the municipal elections it was drawn out by religious or race antipathies. If such antipathies are a good thing in politics, the woman's vote is a good agency for promoting them. — *Boston Journal*.

WOMAN SUFFRAGE IN WYOMING.

ELSEWHERE we print a communication as to woman's suffrage in Wyoming. To anyone who knows anything of recent Wyoming politics, the statement about "peaceful and orderly elections, good government, and a remarkable degree of civilization and public order" is simply grotesque. According to the statements of all parties, politics in Wyoming are as corrupt as in any State in the Union. It certainly cannot be held up as a model for other States in any respect, and the women who want to vote injure rather than help their cause by citing it as an example of what woman's suffrage will do to purify elections and secure good government. — *Colorado Springs Gazette*, March 12, 1893.

WOMEN MAYORS.

EVERY now and then some suffrage advocate points to a Kansas "city" with a woman mayor, as evidence that woman suffrage is a great success. A year or two ago Edgerton was the particular "city" cited as an example. A little inquiry developed the fact that the population of Edgerton was only 321, that the woman mayor was elected as a joke, and that she resigned the office. Now Kiowa is quoted as an instance of the same kind. But Kiowa has a population of less than a thousand, and it is clearly absurd to quote the experiments of these small Kansas hamlets as having any bearing upon the trial of woman suffrage in great eastern cities.

FOREIGN REVERSES.

WITH the exception of New Zealand, where women have been admitted to the parliamentary suffrage, the movement has made no progress abroad during 1893. No vote was taken on the general question in England. In Manitoba parliamentary suffrage for women was defeated, yeas 11, nays 28. Similar bills were defeated in the legislatures of Ontario and Nova Scotia. The Norwegian Storthing defeated a woman-suffrage bill in June. In Denmark a bill giving municipal suffrage to women passed one branch of Parliament but was defeated in the other.

A MENACE TO THE HOME.

WE have had successive extensions of that which is called liberty, but ought, if we would think clearly, to be called political power; for a man may have liberty without a vote and a vote without liberty. But hitherto the changes, though some of them have been blind and dangerous enough, have imperiled only the State. The change now proposed vitally affects the family, which, until the Socialists have their way, will be of fully as much consequence to us as the State. It is easy to draw ideal pictures of husband and wife agreeing to differ on political questions, going at elections to opposite committee-rooms, perhaps speaking on opposite platforms, voting on opposite sides, and then returning to a blissful hearth, with harmony and affection unimpaired. This ideal might be realized in the case of such a couple as Mr. and Mrs. John Stuart Mill. But what are the effects of a faction fight on the tempers of ordinary humanity? Would unbroken harmony now prevail between a Unionist husband and a Gladstonian wife? Hitherto the family has been a unit, represented in the State by its head, and whatever storms may have raged in the commonwealth, the peace and order of the home have remained usually undisturbed. A change which throws the family into the political caldron calls surely for special consideration. — *From Goldwin Smith's Questions of the Day*.

KANSAS AND THE SUFFRAGE.

A VIGOROUS campaign is in progress in Kansas in the interest of the proposed amendment to the Constitution giving to women full suffrage rights on the same terms as men. Not only are the local suffrage organizations actively at work, but aid in money, speakers, and literature is freely given by the national and State organizations of the country. Although the vote is not to be taken until next Novem-

ber, the campaign of the suffragists is prosecuted as vigorously as if the settlement of the issue were imminent. The fact that Kansas is the one State in the Union, with the exception of little Wyoming, in which municipal suffrage has been granted to women, and in which the spectacle of women actively participating in politics is not a novelty, makes the campaign on the part of the suffragists a more than ordinarily hopeful one. The Populists are cordially committed to the movement, and we believe that the last Republican platform contained expressions favorable to it, but the campaign does not proceed along party lines.

There is one consideration which should appeal forcibly to the conservative voters of Kansas, in connection with this movement. Suppose that women are admitted to full suffrage and to participation, on equal terms with men, in all the responsibilities of government, what is likely to be the effect upon the stability of legislation and the credit of the State? This inquiry is specially pertinent, in view of the kind of women who have already been brought to the front in Kansas in recent political campaigns. Of these women the somewhat famous Mrs. Lease is a type, and there are hundreds of others of the same class, though less known outside of the State. These women are shrill, vehement, and irresponsible, and capable of being carried to almost any extremes of language and presumably of action by their ungoverned impulses. They have but vague ideas of the limitations of government or of business and financial questions. Suppose that women of this class exercise the full rights of the suffrage and are elected to the Legislature and to executive and judicial offices, who can predict what consequences would result?

It would be unjust to assume that all the women of Kansas are of this class, but it is reasonably certain that the women who have thus far been most active in politics would be the leaders under the new order of things. Last month's county elections in Kansas gave gratifying evidence that the State is coming to her senses. The sweeping Republican victories were an assurance of the decadence of Populist strength, and seemed to augur the assertion of sober and temperate influences. Suppose that woman suffrage were to be voted, is it not probable that the net result would be a large accession of Populist strength? We should suppose that this consideration was calculated to make Kansas Republicans hesitate on the threshold of such an experiment. If a mistake is made, it is not of the kind that can be retraced. In view of the crude and unsafe principles which have been occasionally dominant of late in Kansas, well-wishers of the State could hardly regard without concern the workings of so dubious an experiment. — *Boston Daily Journal*, December 23, 1893.